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6. — *Essais de Morale et de Critique*. Par ERNEST RENAN, Membre de l'Institut. Paris: Michel Levy. 1859. 8vo. pp. 478.

ERNEST RENAN is still a young man, as yet only in his thirty-seventh year; yet he has won fame as an Oriental scholar second only to that of Sylvestre de Sacy. His mastery of the Hebrew, Arabic, and Syriac is so thorough, that he writes familiarly in each of these tongues, and in the whole range of philological research he has few superiors. His command of the French language, too, as the volume before us splendidly shows, is quite equal to his command of the Semitic dialects. A more remarkable series of essays, judged by literary merit alone, has not for a long time been issued from the French press. His "Essays on Religious History," collected and published in 1857, were full of promise, which has been fully verified by this new series. It contains thirteen articles, all of them critical, and six of them on biographical subjects. The characters with whom he deals are De Sacy, the younger, as a representative of the liberal school, Cousin, Augustin Thierry, Lamennais, the Benedictine Luigi Tosti, and Creuzer, the German Professor. Besides these biographical criticisms, there are short discussions on the Revolutions of Italy, the "Secret History" of Procopius, the Arabic "Séances" of Haraïri, the mediæval farce of "Patelin," the French Academy, and the Poetry of the French "World's Fair." The closing article, which is long, elaborate, and full of recondite learning, is on the "Poetry of the Celtic Races." It is impossible to praise these articles too highly, whether for candor, insight, originality of view, breadth of scholarship, or beauty of style. Not a page is dull, and no page is without some striking thought. The tone of the volume is that of moderate, but very decided liberalism,—of sympathy with man, while there is due respect for institutions. M. Renan never defends despotism or arbitrary power, though he treats it fairly, and sometimes apologizes for its excesses. He believes in the possibility of human progress, and associates himself rather with Rémusat and Laboulaye than with Montalembert and Lacordaire. His vindication of Lamennais is generous and brave, yet he does not fail to show the weak side of this gifted apostate, and to deplore his spiritual self-destruction. M. Renan believes that it is possible to work within the Church for that end which the Church carries in its very idea. Occasionally, some of his sagacious remarks fail to commend themselves to our moral approbation. We cannot assent to the maxim in the article on Cousin, that "it is an excellent principle, always to act in office as if one's successor might be an enemy." Though not properly a political writer, M. Renan has shown, in these Essays, that he well

understands both the Italian and the Turkish questions, and has a reasonable solution to give of the difficulties involved in them. His book has a rare charm for a thoughtful reader.

7. — *Fiji and the Fijians*. By THOMAS WILLIAMS and JAMES CALVERT, late Missionaries in Fiji. Edited by GEORGE STRINGER ROWE. New York: D. Appleton & Co. 1859. 8vo. pp. 561.

WE are not able to determine from anything in this volume to what extent the "editor's" care has been applied or needed. As we read it, each part of the volume seems to have its peculiar style, and to be the work of a single author. The whole is interesting, and the first part is curious and valuable. In this, Mr. Williams has given a very complete account of the Fiji Islands and their inhabitants, the geography, geology, history, productions, methods of government, political and industrial relations, manners and customs, religion, and language of the different groups and families, — arranged, moreover, with admirable conciseness and precision. In the whole account, there is scarcely a superfluous word; and the necessary relation of horrors is so tempered by understatement, that one is saved from the disgust which the bare facts create in a Christian heart. A few instances there are of incorrect English, and occasional vulgarisms mar the page; as, for instance, where it is said that "the leaves, when boiled, *eat* like those of the mercury"; that the "*canes girt* from three to seven inches"; and where the cutting of hair on the right and left side of the forehead is described as cutting it to *windward* and to *leeward*; but, in the main, the narrative is easy, flowing, and in good taste. While it is the more interesting as the story of a people about whom very little has been accurately known, it fully confirms the impressions which civilized nations have attached to the name of the "Fijians." With all his softening of color, Mr. Williams has given us the picture of a race of cruel, crafty, malicious, brutal cannibals, with hardly one redeeming feature, either in customs or character. The very worst associations connected with their name are justified. Their religion is a low feticism, their habits are beastly, murder is their perpetual pastime, gratitude is unknown among them, war is their chief duty, and vengeance their ruling passion. Nowhere on the face of the earth does the beauty of nature seem more strongly contrasted with the degradation of man. In these lovely lagoon-islands, every prospect may please, but man is emphatically vile. Some facts mentioned by Mr. Williams may mitigate the